Indian POWs in Pakistani Jails

1890. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the question of release of 54 Indian POWs of 1971 Indo-Pak war languishing in Pakistani jails was raised by the Prime Minister with his counter-part during Agra Summit;

(b) whether the Pakistan Foreign Office has after verification, come out that there is no POWs and invited Indian families to visit Pakistan Jails; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to check the veracity; of the Pakistani statement, so as to console the affected Indian families?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) yes, Sir.

(b) On 28th July, 2001, Government of Pakistan informed the Government that concerned authorities were physically rechecking the records of all prisons in Pakistan to ascertain if any missing Indian defence personnel from 1971 war was detained there. Subsequently, it informed that a search of all prisons in Pakistan was conducted on the directives of President Musharraf but no Indian POW was found detained there. It has offered to facilitate a visit to Paskistan by the relatives of POWs.

(c) Government has impressed upon Pakistan the need to continue with the efforts until the POWs are located and repatriated. Government has also had consultations with members of the families/ relatives of POWs in this regard.

Empowering Government to suspend passport

1891. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government arc proposing to bring a legislation which would empower Government to suspend passport or travel document of a person for a certain period;